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Robert Owen by F. Podmore

Review by: J. D. Rogers

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instantly and generally applied to stop this depopulation. Here as elsewhere a tepid douche of reason is perhaps needed to temper some ignorant if amiable enthusiasm. It is the ungrateful but necessary task of the economist, statistician, and historian to administer this corrective; and it is done with expert ease by Professor Nicholson, the more effectively because he is not an opponent of moderate reform in this or in other promising directions in agricultural affairs.

L. L. PRICE

Robert Owen. By F. PODMORE. (London: Hutchinson. Two vols.)

THIS book is prefaced by two apologies for its existence: one that G. B. Lockwood has written one or two recent books about Owen's communistic colony at New Harmony (U.S.): the other that some hundreds of letters by or to Owen, and dated subsequently to 1823, at which date Owen's autobiography ends, have been recently unearthed. The correspondence is not of first-rate interest: and Mr. Browning's labours have not thrown light on some of the essential problems of New Harmony. How was civil justice administered? Why did the *New Harmony Gazette* advertise forms of summonses, ca. sa., and fi. fa.? How was it that partition actions were brought by New Harmonists or their heirs before the Circuit Court? If Queenwood was blown to pieces by *Pare v. Clegg*, how could New Harmony survive similar whiffs of grape-shot? Indeed, some sceptics doubt whether New Harmony differed widely from many other infant colonies. There was the same loss of founders' capital, the same capacity to live on capital, especially other people's capital, for a year or two, the same absence of coin, the same general store, and the same necessity for some unremunerated common labour. True! the New Harmonists were the second instead of being the first settlers at New Harmony: and their interminable debates and everlasting dances are apt to recall descriptions of savage tribes rather than of colonial pioneers: and perhaps the greatest novelty was Owen's triumphant announcement to the New Harmonists that on July 4th, 1826, the first year of mental independence began, because it was then and there that "the three-headed hydra"—irrational religion, private property, and marriage of the old-fashioned kind—was finally overthrown. History, alas! is silent on the effects of this glorious victory over the third of the three Aunt Sallies. Indeed, Mr. Podmore, in referring to the dawn of Mental Independence, does not think it worth while to explain to the reader

the triple meaning which these latter-day Independents attached to their newly-won independence. It need hardly be added that no aspersion has ever been cast on the family life of Owen or of his immediate kith and kin : but his doctrines must surely have exposed a new colony to solvent and corrosive influences from which most new colonies have been exempt.

If the book depended for its justification on these two apologies its condition might excite anxiety : but in truth a life of R. Owen needs no apology ; and Mr. Podmore has, on the whole, discharged his task with scholarly criticism and patient research. Owen was the one source so far as England was concerned—of infant schools, factory Acts, and co-operation. Mr. Podmore's account of New Lanark—the first home of infants' schools and of the factory Acts—travels over old ground, but the subject is ever fresh, and its treatment by Mr. Podmore is excellent. On the first beginnings of co-operation, and its complication with communisms and moneyless labour exchanges, there was nothing of importance to add to what Miss Potter, Benjamin Jones, and others have written, yet here, too, the interest of Mr. Podmore's book never flags, and in the Queenwood experiment the recently discovered letters stand him in good stead.

Having praised we may perhaps be allowed to blame, and such small blame as we have to deal is concerned with the obscure and often unanswerable question of the connection between Owen's movement and kindred movements. Mr. Podmore's refusal to see any link between Fourier and Owen is short, sharp, and decisive. "It is perhaps scarcely necessary," he says, "to say that Owen owed nothing to Fourier. The latter's *Traité de l'Association domestique* did not come out until 1822." Surely Mr. Podmore knows that Fourier proposed his "Associations agricoles" and "phalanges" in his *Théorie des quatre mouvements*, which appeared in 1808, or nine years before Owen proposed his "Associations" "having their basis in agriculture." Again, if he will look at the 1841 edition of the *Œuvres Complètes* he will see that Fourier proposed "phalanges" of 800, 810 (vol. i., p. 238), or 1,200 inhabitants (vol. i., p. 446) : and that these numbers occurred in his first edition. It is certainly odd that Owen wrote in 1820 :—"From 800 to 1,200 will be found the most desirable number to form into agricultural villages." Possibly these and other resemblances were due to the Zeit-Geist and its humorous inseparable companion Chance. But Mr. Podmore's dismissal of Fourier is, to say the least, abrupt. *Apropos* of Fourier Mr. Podmore might have added that Doherty or Dog-

herty, to whom he refers as piloting Owen about Paris in 1848, was a Fourierist.

Again, Mr. Podmore attributes Owen's "Labour Exchange" in Gray's Inn Road (1832) to the example of J. Warren's "time keepers . . . giving me what I wanted, and in return for notes representing hours of labour," and he refers to Noyes. Noyes never describes any time store of Warren at which goods were exchanged for notes. On the contrary, the only time store of Warren referred to by Noyes is described as follows: "I went to the time store with my note and my cash the keeper . . . giving me what I wanted, and in return taking from me as much *cash* as he paid for the article to the wholesale merchant," charged for the ten minutes' attendance by a labour note for ten minutes. Mr. Podmore misquotes Noyes. Warren always sold his goods for cash until in later years he invented a corn-note. Owen's one idea was to abolish cash. Oddly enough, the genesis of Owen's paper-money is one of the few things about Owen that are quite free from difficulty. Warren is only a red herring drawn across a clear scent.

Again, Mr. Podmore rejects Owen's claim "that the foundation of these Dutch colonies," Frederick's Ooord, &c., "was directly due to his teaching," although that claim "has been endorsed by Holyoake and others, I cannot find any justification for the claim." Owen's claim was far more specific than the reader might infer from this summary remark. Owen, "after offering the British Government a plan for making a pauper population self-supporting . . . transmitted the same through Mr. Falck, the then Ambassador of that court to England." If this was untrue, it is probably the only untruth of its kind which Owen wrote. Even assuming that it was untrue, the Owenite agitation of 1817 in favour of curing pauperism by labour colonies must have been known in Holland, van den Bosch wrote in 1818, and in 1819 "Philanthropos" noted the sequence of date and general idea (Remarks on the Practicability of Owen's Plan, p. 76). It would be almost as difficult to suppose—*pace* Mr. Podmore—that the proposed labour colonies of England (1817) had nothing to do with those of Holland (1818), as it would be to suppose that the co-operative communities, village settlements, and labour colonies which sprang up in the different Australian legislatures thirteen years ago, represented mutually independent growths.

Lastly, Mr. Podmore ought not to have written "At the close of the preceding century there had been in England some 180,000 yeomen small freeholders tilling their own land," unless he told

us whether "yeomen" included clergymen, whether "freeholders" included lessees for life, or copyholders, and who was his authority. The yeoman-myth with which Macaulay and Karl Marx dallied ought to be allowed to rest.

Having censured more perhaps than we should have done, we can only conclude by thanking the author for renewing our acquaintance with a great social pioneer and experimentalist, to whom there were no distinctions of class or creed, and the secular was so sacred that nothing could be more sacred, and before whom there was always present the vision of a new heaven and a new earth. He was vain, dull, unteachable, but a prophet withal, and the fact that we are able to look on our factory system with pride instead of shame, and the achievements of the co-operative movements of the nineteenth century are due, in the first instance, to Owen's clear insight and unflagging zeal.

J. D. ROGERS

The Coal Question. By the late W. STANLEY JEVONS, F.R.S.
Edited by A. W. FLUX. (Third edition.) London : Macmillan.

THE facts and arguments advanced by Professor Jevons forty years ago in support of the conclusion that coal is the material basis of our national prosperity are as true to-day as they were then. Nor from the fuller information now at our disposal do we know of an efficient substitute for coal, although water, wind, tidal flow, sun heat, and petroleum may prove valuable auxiliary powers, or sources of power. Further, it cannot be gainsaid that the ruling factor in our commercial supremacy must be, not merely the possession of supplies of coal, but that these should be at least as profitable to us as those of our commercial competitors are to them. If we shall not be able to make up for the added cost of having to go deeper for coal, by gaining more power out of it than our rivals, the result must be commercial and national decadence. Jevons laid the greatest weight upon the relative increase of our production to that of other countries. Based upon that for several years prior to 1863, our increase was taken at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum, and, assuming this rate to be kept up, he calculated the production for every tenth year from 1861 for a period of a century. The fifth of these decennial periods was 1901, and so an opportunity is afforded of testing the correctness and value of the calculated rate of increase, for forty years. According to his figures the production in 1901 should have been 331 millions. In reality it was 245 millions—a significant differ-